

## Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 1502, Consumer and Display Fireworks – Regulation and Tax

Christine King

March 9, 2026

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee, My name is Christine King, and I am writing to respectfully express my strong opposition to House Bill 1502, which would allow the detonation of commercial-grade fireworks under conditions that include a minimum distance of 150 feet from surrounding properties.

As a native Marylander who lived in Florida for 30 years before returning, one of my reasons for returning to the State were the laws and priorities in Maryland that recognized the care and treatment of our beloved animals and fellow humans.

Fireworks caused havoc on the dogs and horses in Southwest Florida where I lived. The animal shelters were always crowded after New Years Eve, Fourth of July, and any other holiday Floridians could think of for lighting fireworks, because scared pets ran away or were just traumatized and ill.

Horses had to be kept indoors and monitored for the extreme stress of fireworks, it took preparation and caused anxiety to horse owners and caregivers and the animals.

Horses Are Important to Maryland's Economy and Heritage Horses are deeply woven into Maryland's history, culture, and economy. From the state's longstanding Thoroughbred racing tradition to the many farms, training facilities, and equestrian programs across the state, horses contribute significantly to Maryland's economic, agricultural, and recreational sectors.

Protecting equine safety is not just an animal welfare issue—it is a community and economic issue as well.

- The MD horse industry is responsible for more than 28,000 jobs and has an economic impact of nearly \$3 billion.<sup>6</sup>
- More than 30% of households in MD contain horse enthusiasts who participate in or attend recreational equine activities.<sup>7</sup>

House Bill 1502 may appear to regulate fireworks use does not adequately account for the presence of horses and other large animals and dogs and pets that are extremely vulnerable to explosive noise. For those of us who care for and ride horses and have dogs, this bill creates a real and preventable safety risk. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose House Bill 1502. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine King

Gaithersburg MD